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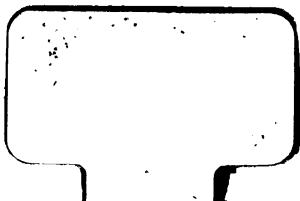
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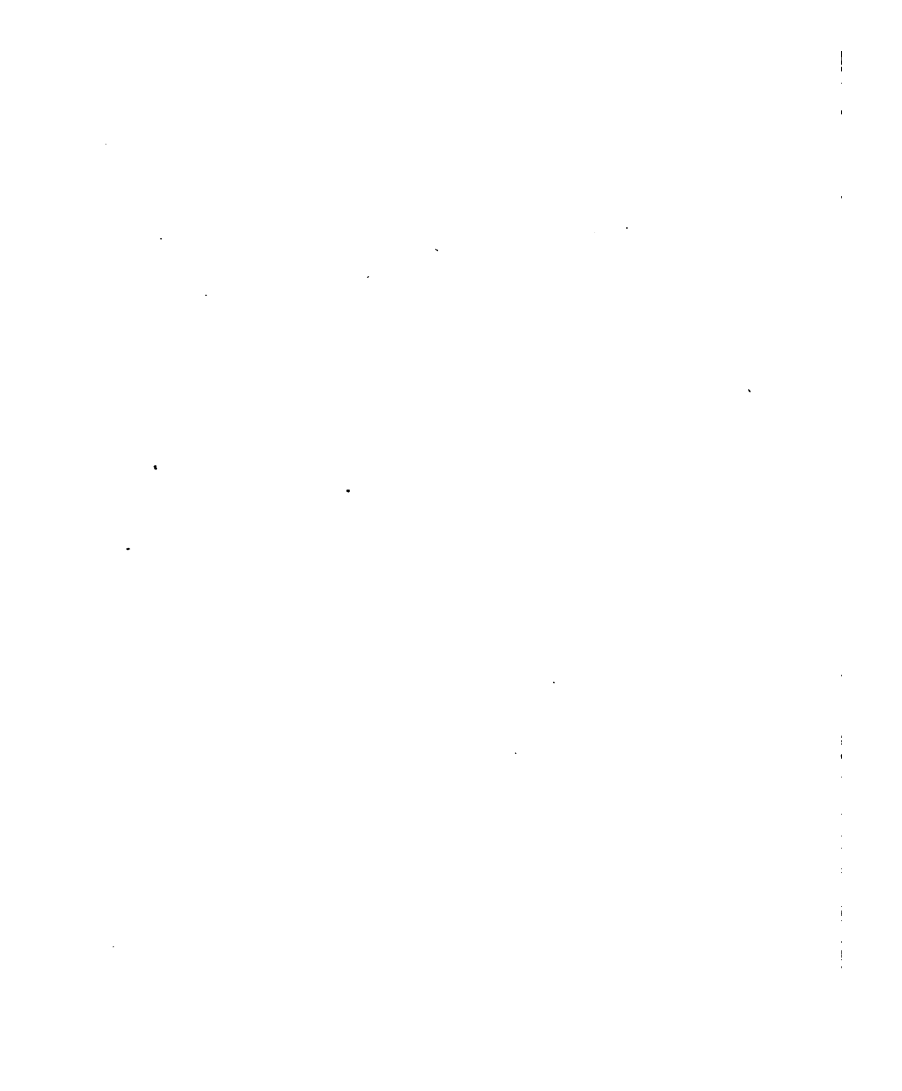
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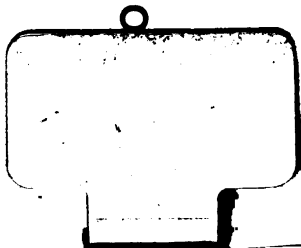






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Wednesday, 14 June 2006







**THE CONFESSIONS OF
HONOR DELANY.**



See page 33.

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HONOR DELANY.

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**THE CONFESSIONS OF
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OF
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IT isn't but I know there's few would care to hear whether I lived or died, or what became of me; and that it is little matter to any body if the stories John Malone tells about me be true or false: but I don't like to lie under his tongue without saying a word to clear my character: above all, when he makes free with the names of them he has no right to meddle with: so I will tell, without fear or favour, all that ever happened unto me from the day I was born to this good hour—and not one word of lies will I say, nor lay a heavier charge to any man's door than they deserve; nor will I screen myself from blame when blame lies upon me, though the blush should come up in my old cheeks while I tell it—why should I? I am past fourscore, with a dim eye and a tottering foot, and if I had my lap full of gold, what good would it do me now, if it:

wasn't to bury me; and it's little will do that when the time comes.

I am come of *credible* people, as all the country well knows, and I was reared in decency and plenty in my father's house; which he could well afford to his family, having sixty-four acres of fine land, under the Twistlebury's, at two and eightpence-halfpenny the acre, not counting as good as three hundred pounds he got by my mother. She was M'Donough both by father and mother, and proud enough she was of it, they being an ancient family, that in old times had the whole barony of Tirnaboolish to themselves. Her fault was pride, I may say it of her now, for she didn't care who knew it when she was alive. No doubt she had a great spirit, and would spend more than my father could well spare, though he seldom crossed her, or prescribed to her in her fancies. She was the only woman of her station in the country, barring the priest's niece, that took her tea morning and evening, and I often heard her to brag, that there was not a pair of silver buckles in the chapel of a Sunday, but what was in her own shoes. Nobody had such a name with the poor as herself, and the Priest would draw her down as a pattern for the entertaining he got in her house. She was very *reglar* in her duty, and was fond of making vows, which she paid well to have performed. There was two old women that made a decent livelihood by going through stations for her; one of them, Eveleen M'Loughlin, said she had hardly time to repeat a prayer for herself, with

all she had to do in that way for my mother. The M'Donough's were time out of mind noted for religion. My mother could count up as good as eleven cousins Priests, besides her uncle the Bishop, and her sister the Nun; them two last brought a deal of credit to us, and cost my father plenty when they came to the house, as my mother thought the best in the country not good enough to set before them.

There was five of us in all; one girl besides myself, and three boys. I was the youngest, and the pet with my father. He made no secret of *that*, though my mother would often ridicule him for it, as she thought little of women children in comparison of her sons. My eldest brother, Phelim, was the one she took most pride out of, and gave him a fine education, for he was intended for the mission. The next boy, Connor, she favoured too, he was so like the M'Donoughs; but the youngest, Richard, she could hardly bear to sit in her presence. She never was rightly persuaded he was her child, but that the fairies changed him the night he was born; so she had him put out on a shovel before the door with sixpence halfpenny on his breast, in hopes to bribe the good people to lay her own son back again. Eveleen M'Loughlin was left on the watch, hid in the turf-stack, but she had to take him in at last, when he was perished with cold and hunger. After that she sent him with the girl to cross a running stream, expecting the fairy would show himself, but not a stir the poor child ever stirred, though the girl waded twice

through with him in her arms. The Bishop would never give in to such doings, while Father Hugh Lynch did all that man could do to banish the fairy, and all to no end.

Poor Richard! I was very fond of him, and so I ought, seeing he doated on me; and when we were playing by ourselves, he could be as merry as the best of them: but when my mother was by, he would sit saying nothing, only doing every thing he was bid; while his brothers were ever knocking him about, and calling him nicknames, which he never minded, and wouldn't make an unmannerly answer. He had a *quare* look for certain; the more so, belonging to our family, that had the name of being handsome. My eldest brother and sister were said to be the likeliest two in the Barony of Tirnaboclish, and there was them that said, when I was dressed for the dance on a Sunday evening, that I was passable enough—that's a long time ago, however. Poor Richard wasn't like one of the family, who all had black hair, and white skins, with a fine colour in their cheeks; nor was he like any body I ever saw before or since. His hair was whiter than the whitest strick of flax, and sure enough his eyes were not natural; they were red, as red as any ferret, and never were quiet in his head, moving back and forward like a weaver's shuttle; besides, he couldn't see if the thing wasn't close to his eyes, but when he once saw any thing, he never forgot it, and could explain it better than we could that

had our senses. There's no doubt he was stupid, for though there was a schoolmaster in the house ever since I remember, he never could *larn* his A, B, C, while the rest of us could read any book, by the time we were twelve or thirteen. With all that, it was wonderful what a memory he had: Prayers in English and Irish he could repeat for the length of a summer's day, and ballads, and rhymes, and songs, to no end. Then he would sing till you would be persuaded no Christian's throat could bring out such sounds; and I, knowing the thoughts my mother and the old women had of him, have often felt my flesh creep, when I heard him singing of a summer's evening, all alone in the haggard, where he used to go when they tormented him in the house. Being cowed so much in the family made him quite silent as he grew up. When all the others were laughing over the fire, he would sit by himself, looking up at the rafters, and would sometimes burst out laughing at his own thoughts like. That would set my mother mad. She would cross and bless herself, and giving him a curse, would be ready to fling the tongs at him, till he would have to run to bed by himself in the loft, for neither of his brothers would let him sleep with them. My father was fond of him, and always got him to tot up his money for him, which he could do before us that would cypher and write sums as long as my arm.

. In them days there were no such doings as now,

about Schools, and Testaments, and Priests, and Ministers. We were quiet and easy about our religion, going to mass *reglar*, and doing any odd duty that came in our way. The schoolmaster learned us the prayers, so that we could say the Rosary as fast as the Priest himself, when my mother was in a hurry; and every night going to bed we used to repeat this verse—

There are four corners to my bed,
There are four angels round my head,
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Bless the bed I sleep upon.

The only Protestant I ever remember seeing when I was a little girl, was Ally Conolly, a sort of peddling body, that sold threads and tapes, and little bits of muslin to make caps and handkerchiefs. She used to call at our house three or four times a year, and was always welcome to her bit, and a night's lodging, because she had all the news of the country for my mother, though she often had doubts if it was lucky to have her sleeping under the same roof with her. The church was six miles from our town, and the glebe farther off. It was seldom we saw any *rare* quality, though there was plenty of them then scattered through the country; for we lived in a very back place, with the mountain of Slieve Cormack between us and the high road leading to Ballymaganlan. The other side of the Lough there was a place called the English Settlement, because the old Earl of Innisfallen brought

there fifteen or sixteen families from Scotland. They weren't right Protestants, I know, but they went to church, and kept mightily to themselves. I might never have heard of them only that my mother would curse the old Earl for bringing such into the country, and was never thankful enough that the broad water of Lough Glendarragh was between us and them. As for myself, I dreaded the very sound of their name, thinking they had a mark on them to show who they belonged to—that's all the acquaintance I had with them.

As the world went, we spent a pleasant time of our own. The piper was seldom out of the house, so there was few evenings we hadn't a dance after the work was done; and even when the Bishop was in the house, he was no hindrance to us, having the barn to go to; nor did my Aunt Bridget, the Nun, ever find fault with our merry-making, when she spent two months with us the summer of the great thunder; only once, the day that she and my mother had words about a feather-bed, when they were dividing my uncle John's property; and then she said we were more like mummers than decent Christian children.

She got leave to quit the convent that summer, because her health was bad; not but she eat and drank and *slep* as well as any of us that had nothing ailing us. It was convenient for her, any how, just then, to look after what was coming to her by my uncle, and it was wonderful what an eye she had to money, with

not a chick nor child to leave it to. My mother thought it would all come back to the family, which quieted her a little, when she saw her grabbing at every thing: but she left it all to the Convent at last, only fifty pounds to Father Hugh, to say masses for her soul.

I was right glad, and so were all the young ones, when aunt Bridget went away; for she hated children, and was prouder again nor my mother, besides being the ugliest woman you ever laid eyes on. Her face was terribly racked with the small-pox, and her eyes were so crooked that she could see what was doing on her right hand, when you thought she was looking to the left. Then she was as big as any two, and when she was in a passion, her voice was horrid. She and my mother fought by the hour about the money, and we often wondered what it would come to, they used to be so outrageous. But as good luck would have it, my aunt had so many prayers to say in the day, that she could not be long without taking a turn at them: so when my mother was at the worst, she would fall down on her knees, and then the other was fain to give over. But though there was little love between them, my mother was proud enough out of her, she brought such credit to the family. All the country far and near flocked to the house when she was in it—some to be cured, and some only to get her blessing. I don't know if she did many cures, only with sore eyes, and the falling sickness—they she had a great name for—

but she failed quite entirely with Terry McGrath's sore leg; for he never could put a foot under him again, after walking from Cloon, to get her to touch it. Not a bit of credit, however, did she lose by that, as the people laid the blame on Terry and not on her.

If he would say so, my father was as glad as any of us, when she went back to Galway; for what between fighting with my mother, and the coming and going of all the M'Donoughs from all parts, and the resort of Priests, one after the other to say masses, he hadn't a quiet minute to himself: and the meal and pruties and bacon went as if they had wings; for good as my mother was to the poor at all times, she was doubly good then, never locking the meal-chest, nor refusing any thing that was asked in honour of St. Bridget—all out of compliment to her sister.

John Malone says, how I was myself promised to be a Nun, and how I broke my father's heart when I married Garret Delany *again* his will. There's not one word of truth in it from beginning to end. There was no talk ever in the family of making a Nun of any of us; and though, sure enough, my father had no mind at first to give me to him, I had his blessing and his love to his dying day.

Garret was a clean, likely boy, and a good son to his bed-ridden father, and an odd, through-other kind of body, his mother. I never thought of him or he of me, till the Saturday before Ash-Wednesday, when he came a piece of the road with me, as I was going home from

my sister's, who was married the year before to Dick M'Donough, of Carrickenboy, a match that pleased my mother well. Garret was helping me over the ditch, when Father Hugh came riding by.

"Ha! Garret," says he, "I'm glad to see how the wind blows; I was just considering how long you'd be keeping me out of my dues. Don't be delaying, boy. You have but four days before you, and I have so many couple to marry betwixt this and *Sraft-Tuesday* night, that if you ain't quick, my hands may be too full to do your job."

"Oh! please your Reverence," says Garret, "it's time enough for the like of me to think of marriage."

"Time enough, you blockhead!" says the Priest. "Ain't you ashamed of yourself to make me that answer? Me, who am just coming from christening Paddy Duffy's fine young son, and he isn't quite out a year older than yourself. Why, man, you were sixteen last Candlemas, to my own knowledge!"

"True for you, Sir," says Garret, looking odd enough.

"Oh! it's too true," says Father Hugh, "and knowing that, you talk of time enough. What time have you? Why all the powers of man couldn't get you married for six weeks, if you pass Tuesday night!"

"I never thought of that at all, at all," says Garret.

"Then more's the shame for you. Owen Mitchell thought of it, and Phil Conboy thought of it, and others

I won't tell you of, since you are so stupid. Why man alive! if you had any sperrit, you would be making up to that little girl. The old couple at home would have a hearty welcome for her, and her father would come down handsomely, seeing you are an only child, and plenty to begin the world with. Ain't you obliged to me, Noreen, for helping you to a husband?" says he to me, giving me a tap with his whip.

"Sorra husband I want, Sir," says I; "I'm better off as I am."

"I'll believe as much of that as I please, Noreen," says he, laughing. "But, my girl, don't be *consated*, or you'll be sorry when you see Judy Egan holding her head high all through Lent, while you'll be sneaking about, telling all the world you wasn't worth looking after."

With that he rode away laughing, leaving us looking like two fools.

"Owen Mitchell will never get the start of me, that I'll be bound," says Garret, after thinking awhile. "You'd better have me, Norah, out of the face, for there's no use in delaying. I'll demand you from your father this very evening."

"It's all a folly," says I, "I don't want to be married at all. I'm better off as I am."

"And will you let Judy Egan, who hasn't a pair of brogues to her feet, be married before you?" says he.

"Ah, what do I care for her?" says I, "if she was to marry ten."

"I'll never wait six weeks," says he.

"Who wants you?" says I, "you'll get plenty for axing. There's Katto Kelly, you may have her in a minute."

"Aye, and her betters," says he, quite angry, "as I'll show you. You may wait if you like it, till they put you into the Convent, and then you'll be just the very moral of your aunt, the big Nun. Mind, I tell you; *that's* before you."

Now, let John Malone say what he pleases, that was the only word was ever spoke to me about being a Nun: and I was foolish enough to be started at it; for it came into my head that I would go through fire and water, and to the world's end, sooner nor be like my aunt Bridget. So after a good deal of wrangling and coaxing, he persuaded me to let him demand me from my father. I don't know how it was, but my mother, though she run down all the Delanys root and branch, as if they were the dirt under her feet, both afore and after, was brought round in no time, when my father only wanted her countenance to put him off at once. I believe what soften'd her was, that he offered to take me with forty pounds, and a cow, when my sister got fifty, with plenty of linen, and blankets, a fine feather bed, and two cows into the bargain. But she ought to have more expectation besides me, as she was the oldest, and above all joining herself to a M'Donough.

There was eleven couple married the day I was. Proud enough Garret was that we were three before

Owen; and poor foolish me was right joyful that Judy Egan couldn't crow over me.

After a time I was as happy as the day was long. My mother-in-law was, no doubt, peevish and troublesome in her ways. She was always sweeping and scouring, and sweeping and scouring, and after all, the place never had a readied look; for while she was cleaning one thing, she would splash and dirty all about her; and she would feed the pig in the milk pail that she had just made as clean as a new pin. It was hard to bear with her, but Garret contrived we never had words to signify. He could live with anybody, let them be never so fractious. I never saw him out of temper from the day I married him, and the hardest word I ever got from him wouldn't offend a dumb brute. It wasn't three years all out from our marriage, when we had the place to ourselves; for my father-in-law, who was ever failing, died, and the old woman didn't stay long after him. The house was quiet when she was out of it, but I was sorry for her, when I saw it grieved Garret, she being always good to him.

There wasn't a woman in the county had more reason to be contented nor myself, if it wasn't for the crosses I had with my children; seeing how none of them would live with me a month out. With the two first, I had only time to be glad to look at them, when they were taken from me, and in six years I lost four. I was quite broke down with fretting, and Garret nearly as bad as myself. Oh! it's a wearing out thing to be ever

It was a great blow to my mother, who never stopped fretting; and her uncle the Bishop died about that time, and Father Hugh died, so that every thing went wrong with her. Connor, too, betimes was a trouble to her. It was fishing, and dancing, and cock-fighting he took delight in; and though many a good match was proposed to him, he wouldn't give in to it, looking for a great fortune—and *that*, poor boy, he didn't get. .

Garret never had an hour's sickness from the day he was born, and I wouldn't have believed an angel from heaven that told me he was near death on Sunday, and—just think of it! he was a corpse with me on the Tuesday after. They called it a pleurisy—no matter what it was. It left my child an orphan, and it broke my heart.

My mother was a great body for wakes, and she managed just as she pleased. The house was full from one end to the other for two days and nights. I didn't care how many was in it, or how few, for I was taken up with myself; and the first day I minded nothing but the sorrowful look with my father, and I wasn't easy if I hadn't Mary one side of me, and Richard the other.

I found it harder to forgive John Malone what he said about that time, than all he brought up again me before or since. There's them living now, that if they would speak out, could say if he is to be depended on or no—he that wasn't passing twelve at the time. But it's no matter; I will tell my story as if he never meddled with me or mine.

When the boys and girls were merry, and beginning to play their tricks, Richard made me go into the little room, where my mother had her tea with some quiet, elderly people, talking over the news of the country. They were civil enough to me, and spoke well of him that deserved nothing else from them.

"It's a poor thing, any how," says Nancy Gilmor, "to be left a widdy. I felt it sore myself; only I was better off nor many, having three good lumps of boys able to look after the land, and hinder me from being robbed and racked, as a poor lone woman must expect."

"They were good sons to you, Mrs. Gilmor," says Una Farrel, she that lived by the side of the Lough.

"Aye," says Nancy, "the two that's married may speak for themselves. Their wives are happy women to light on the likes of them. They might travel far, before such another two would come in their way. And it isn't for me to say it, but Barney, the boy that's at home with me, is as good as both of them put together. He'll be a sore loss to me, when he sets up for himself; but I wouldn't stand in the light of any decent woman that wanted an honest hard-working boy, who'd be a credit to her, and keep her little property together. Though Barney is my own son, I'll say it of him, there isn't a man in the country I would advise for a husband before him."

"No disparagement to your son, Nancy" says Dick Malone (father to John himself), "the boy is well

enough, but I can't see how there isn't a differ between a gossoon like him, and a man come to years and standing, that knows what the world is, and has a right to know it. And what look up has he, with his little bit of sour land, and yourself into the bargain to support out of it? A sensible woman would look twice before she bothered herself with such as he, when there is them with house and land and plenty besides could be got as ready as your son."

"It's likely you mean yourself, Dick Malone," says she, getting quite red. "May be the wife you buried three weeks ago, if she could speak now, would say she made but a poor bargain when she fell in with you."

"You're angry with me now," says he, "because I seen through your scheme, and wouldn't let you take in a decent family with your smooth talk—but I was afore you, cunning as you are. I got Father Staunton on my side this morning, and he is only waiting till after the berrin to talk to you, Mrs. O'Toole, (looking over at my mother), knowing you are a sensible woman, and will give your daughter the best advice. Oh! it isn't Barney Gilmor *you* would countenance."

"He may save himself the trouble, and so may yes all," says my mother. "Ye'll have no friend in me, I promise you. When did you hear of any woman belonging to the M'Donoughs taking a second husband? It isn't the custom of my people, and she'd be no

daughter of mine would demean herself and break through an ancient rule. So, Norah," (turning to me) "you may lend a deaf ear to all their discourse, and content yourself as you are: for if you were to take up with the tip-top of the parish, I would deny that you belonged to me, and wouldn't look the same side of the road with you."

"Oh mother, dear!" says I, "hold your tongue—Sure, sure, it is cruel to be drawing down such parables to me, who only want to be left alone with my sorrow. What do I care about the M'Donoughs, and their fashions? If one of them never lived in the world, I would be of the same mind that I am now; and that is, I would beg round the world with my little girl in my hand, before I would pass an affront upon his memory that lies cold in the room there. So, all of you let me alone, and match yourselves with them that vallies you. His worst old shoe is more prized by me than the whole of you put together."

"She has your spirit out and out, Mrs. O'Toole," says Una. "Wherever there is a drop of the blood of a M'Donough, it will show itself. Well, well, she's right; but how will she and that donny little girl ever struggle on in this lonesome place without a head?"

"That's what made me speak," says Dick. "It was more on her account than my own. I'm at no loss—Them that has plenty needn't go begging any day."

"No, nor Barney has no *privication* to beg either," says Mrs. Gilmor. "It was all in friendship I said a word, for I thought, who'll keep all together when there's no head?"

I was angry, I won't deny it, so I said, "Keep your friendship for them that axes it. If I can't mind my own business, I'll not meddle with yours. Oh! it's well seen I am desolate, when I must put up with such discourse."

"Don't cry, Norah," says Richard, whispering behind me, "let them talk, but you won't be desolate. I will come and live with you; my father will never say again it, and you'll see we'll get on bravely. I've more in me than they think at home; so don't take on so—don't be crying, dear."

Och; it was then I cried as if I never would stop: One minute I would feel a weight taken from my heart, when I thought on Richard's goodness, and the next it would be twice as heavy, when I considered how I wanted it all. They let me alone at last, seeing I wouldn't listen to reason; and that did me more good than all their talk.

There was a great funeral, and the greatest cry was ever heard in the country. Ah! he was well liked, and so he ought.

Richard stopped with me from that hour, and he was quite another man when there was nobody to cow him. He was up early and late, bought and sold at the market and fair as well as the best, and nothing ever

went wrong that he took in hand. The neighbours wondered at him, and were ever praising him, only Dick Malone (John's father, as I said before), and Nancy Gilmor, who would often drop a hint that the good people helped him. I didn't then mind what they said, for he only laughed at them; and, knowing he wanted me to be happy, I tried to be so, as well as I could. Any how, whatever I wanted, there was peace in the house, and peace is a great thing.

The girl I had then, and for long before, was Darky Elwood, who never was easy till she got to live with me, knowing we would treat her well, and not cast up the discredit of her mother to her, as many did. It was well known she had a gentleman to her father, old Elwood of the Forest; though little she ever got by him. He might have done something for her, if it wasn't for the mother, who was the foolishlest woman the world ever saw, disgracing herself every way, till the worst in the country would be ashamed to be seen speaking to her. While she lived, Darky had a poor life with her, and even after she died, though no blame could ever be laid at Darky's door, still the mother's faults were often cast up to her. It was long before any one would hire her, and when she did get a place, she had to bear the jibes and jeers of them that had no manners; and *that* went nearer to her than you might think, being a silent girl, that seldom would make an answer, except when provoked entirely. She was well in years when she came to me—turned of fifty by her

own reckoning—and never was married, which wasn't to be wondered at, for few would look after the like of her while the mother was alive, even if she was not so *ornary*, and, with that, so proud, that she would make no freedom with small or great. I will say for her, there never was an honester or more hard-working girl, and one that always kept herself decent. To be sure, she had a good place of it; for I gave her seven shillings a quarter, with liberty to spin one night in the week for herself. All the time she lived with me I never had reason to fault her, but for two things—one was, that she seldom went to confession, and grudged the money to the Priest, though she would give to any poor body that came in her way, and lent many a penny they never paid her back—the other was, that she would ever be singing at her work, when you couldn't know one air from another. It was more like a bee than a Christian, and though it was low, you could hear it quite plain, when our two wheels would be making a noise that would drown any thing but it. Nothing would stop her if Richard didn't begin to sing, which I would often beckon to him to do, when I was fairly tired out with her; and then she would listen for ever; but the minute he was done she would take up her own *cronaun* again. I wouldn't offend her by passing a remark on her manner; for it was little comfort she had in life: and why should I debar her of singing the best way she could if it pleased her? But it was the *quare* singing!

Richard took great delight in Mary, who, I believe, loved him as well as myself. Every evening, he would make her repeat her Christian Doctrine, and the Catechize, and prayers of all kinds, with ballads and rhymes, that he had to no end. He would make her sing too, till he said she could hit off the Coolin, and Shuil Agra, as well as himself; but that wasn't true; nobody ever sung to equal him. Sure enough, I had great peace then, and more comfort than I was willing to confess.

It wasn't a year all out from my misfortune, when my father died. Poor man! it was well seen he wasn't comfortable in himself latterly. The family was scattered, and my mother and Connor were always disputing. There was plenty of disagreement too about his will. He left all to my mother, to do what she pleased with it, only a trifle of twenty pounds a piece to Connor and Richard. I that lived in the house with him never could see by Richard if he took it to heart or no; and when Darky faulted the will, and said it was an unnatural shame, he bid her whisht, and mind her own business; which startled her so, that she didn't sing one word that night after. It was the first time he was ever heard to say that much to mortal.

Connor went mad entirely. It took great flattering to get him to the churchyard the day of the funeral,—and he threatened to list, and do what not, but when he cooled, he thought it best to make a friend of my mother, and stay at home to have an eye over my sister

and her family, afraid they would get all if he was out of the way. I had nothing to do but keep peace between them if I could. I seldom went to my mother's, seeing Connor was jealous of me, though he had no reason, as she gave me little welcome at the best of times, and was always drawing comparisons between my *one*, with her pale face, and the eight strong, rosy children belonging to my sister.

I told you before of the place, called the English Settlement, where the Scotch people lived. One of them took a bit of ground in the next townland to us, when the seven families went to America. He was an aged man, and went by the name of Sandy Gordon. His wife, too, was well in years; and a lonely life they must have had of it, their children being all settled the other side of the Lough. They were a decent-looking couple, as far as I could judge from the little freedom I made with them, for I dreaded the sight of them, not being of the church; and Father Staunton often said that the country had no luck since the like of them came into it. Richard would never be persuaded to make strange with them. He said he would be civil to any body was civil to him, and old Sandy often gave him good advice about cattle. The man would be now and then in and out of our house, so that after awhile I got accustomed to see him without thinking bad, and Darky, that had a bold spirit, made free with them from the beginning, borrowing the churn-dish from the old woman, when ours was broken, as if she was one of

ourselves; but I wouldn't put a foot inside their door, if you paid me for it.

Richard was living with me going on five years, when Miss Clara would have Mary stop at Lismire to larn to sew from her maid, who was wonderful at the needle. Madam Dunworth herself sent me a message about it; and Richard and Darcy, and all of them, were ever persuading me not to stand in the child's light; so I was forced to let her go, though it went to my heart to be parted from her one hour. I was always making one excuse or other to go down to the house; and the Madam guessing my uneasiness, told me one day that I must stay there too, having something for me to do about young pea-fowl she was rearing. Glad enough I was to take her at her word, and we were there as good as two months, till Mary could sew as well as Miss Bently herself.

I wasn't a bit sorry to get home after all. Oh! there's nothing like a floor of one's own, let it be ever so poor! Darcy was joyful to see us too, though she didn't say much; only I knew it by her, when she settled the pewter on the dresser six times over, and spun her thread so fine that she spoiled her hank. I had so much to say, I didn't notice any thing odd about Richard then, but in a little time I saw that he was an altered man. He would sit silent by the hour, as he used to do when he was a boy, and in dread of my mother, and though loving as ever to Mary, he never called her to repeat her Christian Doctrine, or go over

her prayers. Not a song neither would he sing for us, though I often put her up to axing him for one; and yet, betimes, I could hear him, when he went to bed, singing to himself out-of-the-way outlandish airs, that had neither sense nor meaning in them. I was loth to worry him, axing what ailed him, when I saw he didn't like it; but I was uneasy in my mind, and I noticed it one day to Darky, when we had the house to ourselves.

"Nothing ails him," says she, "only the loneliness while ye were away. He got a fashion of holding his tongue when he had nobody to talk to but old Sandy Gordon and his wife; and though they are civil people, they are but of few words. Never heed him; his spirits will come round when the birds begin to sing in Spring. I am lightsomer myself then, nor any part of the year."

I was fain to put up with that reason, for want of a better; though it didn't satisfy me; for I never could see what differ the longest or shortest day made in Darky—she was ever the same—working and singing, working and singing.

Oh! I had no notion what was in his head, no more nor the child unborn, let John Malone say what he will. How could I? when he never opened his mind to me, one way or other; or was no way altered, only being changed entirely. There was one thing, for certain, might have put me on my gard, if I heard it at the time, but Darky vexed me, putting in her word

when it wasn't wanted, so I dropped the discourse, afraid of saying what I might be sorry for. *That* was one fine Sunday, drawing to the end of October, when the boys in the next town gathered to dig out the lame woman's potatoes, and two of them passing the door, axed Richard to go with them. It was a surprise to me, that he who was always the first to do a friendly turn for any body, wouldn't join them, say what they would, and they went away funning him about Jack Farrell's daughter; making as if he was going to court her. I was a little nettled at that, for she was one he wouldn't be looking after, so I said, "Do, Richard, take the loy, and show as good-will to the afflicted as the other neighbours."

"I wish her as well as any of them," says he, "and I will give her help another time if she wants it, but this is no day for work."

"Ah! what do you mean, Richard?" says I.

"I mean," says he, speaking very quick, and moving his eyes faster nor ever, "that to work on a Sunday isn't right. It is downright sin."

"Now listen to him," says I. "Did ever any body hear the like of that? Why, man, doesn't the Priest get in his hay and oats always on a Sunday evening; and if it was a sin do you think he would favour it?"

"No matter," says he, "who does it, it's a bad thing, and I'll have no hand in it."

"My blessing on you for your sperrit, says Darry, drawing herself up quite stiff as if nobody had a right

to speak but herself. "It's a poor thing, after slaving all the week like pack horses, if one can't have Sunday to rest one's bones. As to the sin I know nothing about that, but it's little one of his sort cares about it, so he gets any thing by it. His work is cheap by catching them after mass; for all it costs him is a little whiskey, and sixpence halfpenny to the piper. I never put myself out of the way for one of them, and it's not likely I'll begin now."

Well, as I said before, I thought Darky took too much on her; and all the night after I was reflecting in my own mind about her stiffness, and in that way Richard's oddity went out of my head, as if it never was in it.

I couldn't go to the chapel for three Sundays after that Christmas, having a megrim in my head, which I was subject to; and Darky kept at home too, while her shoes were mending, for more than a month, so it was hard for me to know where Richard went to. After he crossed the brae, he might turn any airt he took a fancy to, unknownst to me. I never doubted but that he went as usual to his duty, and *that* Sunday, above all, I was putting on me to go with him, only for a threatening of snow that prevented me.

The next day was the fair of Ballymaganlan. Richard was off before there was light in the sky, and Darky contrived to have her shoes home before breakfast; for she set her heart upon buying the makings of a chany blue calico gound, which I thought was above her sta-

tion, but I kept my mind to myself. I was left alone with Mary, and though it was a snowy day, I don't know when I felt more comfortable and easy, little knowing what was before me. As well as I can guess, it was going to eleven by the day, when who should ride up to the door, on a pillion, behind Connor, but my mother, the Priest following close after. She stopped at the door after she lit off the horse, and never noticing the welcome myself or my little girl had for her, she says, with *her* way, that she always had when she was vexed, "Is there any one in the house besides ye two?"

"Sorrah one," says I, "Richard is at the fair trying to sell the slip of a pig, and Darky had a job of her own, so we are all alone, just as you see us."

With that, she pushed by me and sot down on the chair, unpinning the hankercher from under her chin, as if to get room to speak; while Father Staunton was flinging the snow from his hat into the fire, and Connor kept standing by the dresser, looking as black as the darkest night.

"So," says my mother, settling her elbows on her knees, "fine doings you have among yes all!"

"Nothing strange, that I know of," says I, wondering at them all.

"Are you turned heretic too?" says she, choking with passion.

I crossed myself over and over again. "Oh, mother!" says I, "what's come over you? or who is putting between us, that you bring up such a thing *again* me?"

"Mrs. O'Toole," says Father Staunton, "I can answer for the woman, that she has neither act nor part in this bad business. I made you sensible of *that* this morning. Keep up your spirits, Mrs. Delany, (turning to me) you are to be pitied, but I trust not blamed."

"What is it at all, Sir?" says I. "What is it you have *again* me. If I knew it I could make answer, but I can say nothing when it's all hid from me."

"You don't know, then," says he, looking me through and through, "that your brother Richard O'Toole, has sold himself to the devil, and turned Protestant?"

"There's not one word of truth in it," says I. "Somebody has belied him to your Reverence. He couldn't be said or led by man, woman, or child, to bar himself from the light of heaven."

"Where was he yesterday?" says he.

"Sure I may ax your Reverence that. Didn't you see him in the chapel, where he is every Sunday, let it be wet or dry?"

"He wasn't there since Christmas-day," says the Priest, "and I can tell you that yesterday he was in Drumaraue church."

"He was not, you may depend on it," says I; my heart beating as if it would jump through my side. "Somebody envies him, and wants to hurt him with his people. Wait till you hear what he has to say, and he will clear himself, I know."

"I have heard him already," says the Priest. "I way-laid him on the road this morning, and had him

alone with me for near an hour. He wouldn't nor he didn't want to clear himself. He was as *stubbrint* as the blackest Protestant of them all. I tried fair means and foul means, and the only thing I got for my trouble, was his telling me to my face, that he was long a Protestant in heart, and that now, since he leaped the ditch, he would stick to his new religion to the last hour of his life."

"The villain, the villain!" says my mother, "Did I ever think that one belonging to me would disgrace me after this fashion?"

"He was only joking, Sir," says I, crying as if my heart would break; for I guessed it was true, though I wouldn't give into it. "He often joked with myself about many a thing, till you would think him in downright earnest."

"I'm not a man to be joked with," says the Priest, "as he will find to his cost. But my good woman, you need make no excuses for him, he wouldn't thank you for them. He is an open heretic, glorying in his wickedness. It is my duty to set him adrift upon the world. He shan't stay here to poison the mind of you and your daughter, and, may be, others too."

"I'll promise for him, Sir," says I, "that he'll give over his new notions. It was old Sandy and Mabel Gordon put them into his head; and I'll make him forswear their company, and be ever dutiful and obedient to your orders."

"You may save yourself all that trouble," says he,

"I'll manage him my own way. Listen to what I say, and see that you *folly* it. I command you to harbour him no longer; not to let him sleep another night under your roof; not to give him meat or drink, if he was starving, but to banish him entirely till I tell you to the contrary."

"Is it my own brother?" says I.

"His mother has renounced him," says the Priest.

"Ah, no! she hasn't," says I, looking over at her. "Mother dear! you couldn't be so unnatural."

"I have," says she. "I have denied him, and renounced him, and laid my heavy curse on him; and the same is in store for you, if you go again the orders of your clergy."

"No occasion for that, I hope, Mrs. O'Toole," says Father Staunton, "She'll be advised before I resort to other means. Mind, I tell you, be advised," nodding over at me in a very odd way.

There's no use in denying it, but fright was getting the better of me. I cried even a-head still, till I got a little courage to speak, and I grew the bolder as I went on.

"An't I to be pitied among yes all!" says I. "Don't you want me to do what isn't in my nature? No,—I'll never shut my door *again* him while I have one.—I'll never see him want while I have a bit to divide with him. No, no; if he were *twiste* as bad as you would make him, and if all the world looked black on him, he'll be ever welcome to me, and all I have on the face of the earth."

"I warn you not to provoke me," says the priest. "You little know what you are going to draw down upon yourself."

My courage went when I had done speaking. I dare not look at my mother, so I looked over at Connor, but that look took the little strength I had from me; for if ever the enemy put his eyes into a Christian's head, they were in Connor's at that moment. The priest saw me fail.

"Do you still defy me?" says he.

"I don't defy you," says I, for I haven't strength this minute to stand before a fly. But I couldn't turn him from my door—I could not.—O, Sir," says I, raising my two hands, and screeching out with terror, "if there's mercy in your heart, bid me do anything but that."

"My mother dropped on her knees, and begun—" "May my curse and the widdy's curse——"

"Stop, woman!" says the priest; "let me deal with her. A heavier curse than your's shall light upon her."

His look was for all the world the same as Connor's; and my heart stopped beating while he shouted in my ears, "I'll pin you to the ground you're standing on. You shall never leave that spot, till you see what it is to go again my will."

He muttered a few words to himself, and as he went on, a cold sickness came over me, till my limbs grew heavy, and the sight left my eyes. I felt as if I was

going to fall, but I hadn't the power. I stood there with my arms lifted up, and though I tried to speak, no sound would come out of my lips. I heard the cries of my poor child, and I heard Connor wrangling with the priest, and my mother praying, but I seen nothing, I felt nothing, but that the spell was upon me, and that I couldn't shake it off.

My mother had pity on me, and she reasoned cases with the priest to take off the charm. I knew by the way she spoke she was greatly frightened.

"Don't make her the show of the world," says she, "Don't disgrace us before the whole country. Plenty of that has come upon me by the Runagate that has sold himself body and soul. I promise for her that she will obey your commands, and when did you know me go back of my promise?"

"But how can I trust her?" says he, "Hasn't she defied me, and dared me to my face?"

"And isn't she well punished for it?" says Connor. "And you won't be trusting to her; for here's my hand for it, if ever I quit the house till that villain is banished; aye, if I had to burn the roof over his head."

"I'm satisfied," says the priest; and he began to mutter again, but I didn't come to myself as sudden as I was struck: for when he had done, he and Connor had to move me from the place where I was standing, and fix me on the settle-bed. It was all said and done in a shorter time than I am telling it, but it gave me a turn that I never got over from that out.

They settled it all among themselves. I never said for or *again* anything they offered. Connor was to stay that night, to keep his word with the priest, while my mother sent for a neighbour's son to ride back with her; and Father Staunton promised to send a boy in the place of him that was to be hunted through the world like a mad dog.

"It's well for you," says he, when he was going away, "that you have friends to look after you for this world and the next, for a poor hand you'd make of yourself. Never grieve for parting with your care-keeper. You'll be at no loss for a knowing boy to mind the farm. Farghy Conlan has work in his bones not like the blind drone you were bothered with so long."

I made him no answer, for I was so entirely unhappy I did not care what became of me. My mother soon went after the priest, but not before she finished her curse on me and mine, if ever I showed favour or friendship to the heretic.

It was a dismal time that I had with Connor after they left us together. I had no heart to speak, and he kept whistling to himself, and looking out at the snow that began to fall thick at the turn of the day. I believe I was thinking of nothing the whole time, till Darky came in, just after night-fall, and I couldn't look to the door, afraid Richard was behind her. But she was alone, and I began to breathe lighter, and pluck up a little heart, now that I had any body between me and Connor. After looking at him, to

wonder what brought him there, she laid her bundle on the dresser, and slipping a bit of ginger-bread into Mary's hand, and leaving another piece before me, she set to, as her manner was, to ready up the place without saying one word to any of us. Two or three times she gave the bundle a shove towards me, to let me see a bit of the blue calico hanging out of it; but after a while, seeing I took no notice of it, (and how could I think of any thing but my own trouble ?) she flung it on the top of the dresser. and took the pail to milk the cows. She was vexed, I suppose, at us all, for she said in her stiff way, "I wish any one had the manners to drive the poor cattle into the byre, and not leave them standing out in the snow all day, while the master is starving himself, driving home again the weary pig, that gives more trouble than she's worth. I think his dinner might be ready too, again he comes home; that is if he get's home to-night."

"When did you see him last?" says I, the first time I ventured to speak for better nor an hour.

"I left him at the cross roads," says she, "when he made me come home quick, afraid you'd be unasy about him."

"Oh! we're not at all unasy," says Connor, in a jibing way. "He has friends of his own to take care of him. They'll provide a warm corner for him, never fear."

"Them that deserves friends will have friends," says she, putting her apron over her head, and slapping the

door after her, till the plates rung again upon the dresser.

She wasn't gone passing five minutes when Richard came in. I had only one wish then, and that was, that the ground would open under my feet, and let me quietly lie down for ever in it. He walked over to the fire, and said, in his own cheerful way, "Ah, Connor! is that you?" Connor made no answer, but kept looking straight into the fire. Poor Richard was a little dashed to find us all so dark and silent. I knew it by the way he stood, with his hands twisted together.

"It's well for us," says he again, "to have a house over our heads to-night. The snow is come on worse nor ever; and it is so dark, I had enough to do to find my way the last half mile. I'm glad to be at home any how, for it was a wearing-out day. Mary dear," stretching out his arms to the poor frightened creature, "help me off with this coat—it is sticking to my arms with the wet."

"You'd better keep it on," says Connor, getting up from the fire, and facing him. "You'll want it, wet as it is; for, out of this house you'll go this minute."

"What is he at?" says he, turning to me.

"No matter," says the other, "I tell you to turn out." I went between them.

"Richard," says I, "they say you have sold yourself to destruction, and turned Protestant. Tell them they are liars, and prove them liars, and I'll wear out my two knees with praying for a blessing on you."

"Norah," says he, sad like, "I won't deny the truth, though I hid it from you too long. I have left the Romans; but why should that make any differ between us? Why can't we love one another as well as ever?"

Connor lifted his hand, but I pulled it back.

"Let me say one word to him," says I. "His soul may be saved yet, if he listens to me. Richard! you know I love you next in the world to that poor orphan, that is just beside herself with sorrow for you. I believe, this minute, when may be it's a sin to look at you, that I love you better. I suffered for you this day, what no Christian could think of, short of going mad. I would not consent to drive you from me, though I was threatened with the curse of her that brought me into the world; and the hand of the priest was over me, that nailed me to the ground you are standing on. The same curse is on you, and the same charm may change you into a dumb brute to be worried by dogs. Have a thought for yourself, Richard; for I tell you you're a lost man. You've left the true church, the church that can work miracles, as I felt this morning to my cost."

"You were only frightened, Norah," says he, "that was the miracle, and nothing else."

"You don't defy the power of the priest?" says I.

"I defied him this morning, and his charm had no power over me. I wasn't afraid of him. It is the living God alone that I fear."

"Richard, will you break my heart?" says I.

"I wouldn't hurt you for all the world ever saw," says he. "But let me explain myself to you all, and it's likely you may come to my way of thinking."

With that Connor snatched a piece of blazing bog-fir from the fire, and made at him.

"I wouldn't have your blood upon me," says he, "but if you don't quit the place this minute, I'll brain you."

Poor Richard went towards the door, and stopped when he looked out.

"I'd never live out such a night as this," says he, "Let me only shelter myself in any corner till daylight, and I'll give you no more trouble."

Connor made a blow at him with the wood, but missed him, while Mary and I hung about his legs to hinder him murdering his brother.

"Oh! let there be no strife about me," says Richard, "I'll go," and turning out of the door, he gave one look back, and said, "Norah, my blessing, and God's blessing be about you and your's."

"Stop, uncle Richard," says Mary, running to the door, "I'll follow you wherever you go."

"Not to-night," says Connor. "In the morning you may look for him if you can find him."

He then locked the door, and put the key in his pocket, saying, "I have kept my word with the priest, any how."

Mary was obliged to content herself with crying. As for me, I had no sense at all. I would as soon have laughed as cried, but I could do neither.

"Won't you let Darky in?" says I, hearing her bawling and pushing at the door.

"May-be she has somebody under her wing," says he, "but (taking up a bill-hook) this is his welcome, if he offers to put a foot over the *thrashel*."

He unlocked the door, and Darky came in all in a blaze.

"Ah! what's come over the house?" says she, "Are yes afraid of robbers, or what, that them that's *follying* their business can't come in or out, without having doors locked on them? And what was all the wrangling I heard? And ~~who~~ who offended you a-vourneen? (looking at Mary, that she had great pride out of) and where's the master, for sure didn't he pass by, while I was *scoulding* the kicking cow?"

"They've put my uncle Richard out," says Mary, "and will never let him in again."

"Who put him out?" says Darky, staring the eyes out of her head.

"Myself," says Connor, "and I'll serve you the same turn, if you say much to me one way or other."

"What is it all about?" says she, directing her discourse to me.

"Didn't you hear, Darky?" says I, "that Richard has gone and turned to be a Protestant?"

"So some of them had it in the fair to-day," says she, "but what is that to any one but himself?"

"The priest was with me to-day," says I, "and he laid it on me to have done with him. He laid on me

worse than that, when I refused to do his bidding; for he put a charm about me, that left no more life in me than a sod of turf."

"Bad manners to him!" says Darky. That was the worst oath she ever swore. "It's mischief the like of them deals in, and not good. But sure, you, (looking hard at me) wouldn't turn worse nor the brute beasts, and shut the door again him this night of snow, and storm, and darkness?"

"It was my uncle Connor done it," says Mary. "My mother couldn't hinder him; and he beat him out of the house, and what could we do?"

"If there's truth or justice in heaven," says Darky, "you'll suffer for this, Connor. But why do I stand talking here, while the man may be perished in the snow. It's out of all question, that he can find his way through the bog. Let me out till I track him, while I have a chance of seeing his steps. Let me out, I say, for my own life isn't safe with yes both."

"Make yourself asy where you are," says Connor. "You'll not cross the door this night. Remember I advise you to be quiet, or you'll repent it sore."

She saw he was steady in his will, and that she had no chance if she went to struggle with him; so she leant her elbows on the dresser, and kept staring at me, till I was ready to drop.

"Ah, Darky!" says I, at last, "it's my heart that's sore!"

"Poh, woman!" says she, "have you a heart at all?"

Do you listen to the wind and snow beating in at the windy, and tell me you have a heart, after what you have done? If it was Miles Gafney's cur (and of all them that gave me a hard word, his tongue was ever the heaviest on me), if it was his cur that would snarl at me, I wouldn't drive him from my fire-side in a storm like this."

"Well done!" says Connor, forcing a laugh. "Well done Jenny Mattimo's daughter, that was born at the back of the ditch, and had her edication in all the jails in Connaught and Munster! See how grand she talks about her fireside—Ah! where is it, Darky?"

"It's just like you, Connor O'Toole," says she, "to trample on the weak. You have no reproach to bear for your parents' sake, I confess that. But despicable as I am in your eyes, I would not be in your coat for all the Barony of Tirnaboclish. There's sorrow before you, Connor; you can't shun it."

She pulled the wheel out of the corner, and began settling the flax.

"Well, now," says Connor, "since the storm is over in-doors, get me my supper, Darky, like a good girl."

"There's nothing fit for you in the house," says she; "the rats got the last dose we had three weeks last Thursday."

"You're tired, Darky," says I, "and it's no wonder. I'll get the supper. Mary, dear, take down the noggins, while I strain up the milk and get the bread."

I was thankful to have anything to do, and I made more work for myself than I need, to keep away thinking, and hinder Darky angering Connor more; for I knew of old he was like a wild beast, when vexed to the height.

While he was eating his supper, Darky kept turning the wheel like mad, and singing so loud that I couldn't hear the wind whistling through the cracked pane. Sometimes she would stop and listen when there blew a loud blast, and I could be ready to put my hands on my ears from fear and dread. At last, on a sudden, she pushed her wheel away, took the rush-light in her hand, and went up the ladder to the loft where she lay.

"Are you going to bed so soon, Darky?" says I.

"Maybe I am, and maybe I amn't," was all the answer I got. After a time Connor, who was listening, says to me, "What noise is that barge making above there? Is she setting the house a-fire over our heads?"

"No fear of that," says I. "But, sure enough, there is an out-of-the-way noise in the loft; so, Mary dear, run up the ladder, and see what Darky is about—she'll not be vexed at you, dear, though she might with me."

Mary was up and down in a minute.

"Mother, mother!" says she, "Darky has pushed out the windy and all, and has let herself down by the roof of the barn into the haggard."

"What can she be about?" says I, knowing her mind all the time, only I was fearful of Connor.

"She's after the ferret, her sweetheart," says he; "and a pleasant dip they'll both of them have in the big drain, I hope."

"Connor," says I, "you had better go to bed—we'll only be bad company for one another. There's no touch of nature in you. God forgive you for this night's work, and me too; I never desire you to meddle with me or mine again, for I have got enough of you."

"I'll be off," says he, carelessly, "by the screech of day; for my mother will have no peace till she knows Father Staunton is satisfied. I'll let you alone, never fear, if I'm not called to it; but my hand's in for it now, and I'll go through with it, if I had to wade in the blood of more than one."

Saying that, he went to bed, and it was the last sight I had of Connor. Darcy's words came out true, that there was sorrow over him; for, five weeks after, he was drowned while fishing in the Lough. My mother gave up housekeeping when that trouble came upon her, and went to live with my sister till her death.

Though I lay upon the bed, yet not an eye did I close the live-long night—and a long night it seemed to me, even when the storm went down. I heard Connor leave the house as the day began to break, and soon after I knew Darcy's heavy foot on the floor. I was ashamed to look at her, but I called out, "Oh! Darcy, what news?"

"News, indeed," says she stiffly; "where would I get news this time of the day?"

"You understand my meaning well enough," says I; "and if you have any pity for me, tell me what you know about Richard."

He's safe at Sandy Gordon's," says she. "He was there before me last night, and went as straight as if it was a bright summer's day—little thanks to them that gave him the walk. Connor spoke truth for once in his life, when he said, he had friends to take care of him. There was *One* busy for him last night, when he led him safe in a track that the sharpest eye couldn't see."

"Oh! Darky," says I, running out to her, "you are the blessedest woman my eyes ever looked on, to bring me such news. I'll never forget it to you, Darky—do what you will, say what you will, I'll never fault you—I'll never say you done wrong—I'll live and die blessing you, if you were to curse me to my face."

"Let them curse," says she, "that makes a trade of it, and earns a livelihood by it. It's I that don't grudge them their dirty gains, or want to larn their business. But," says she, softening towards me, when she saw my joy, "he bid me give you his love and his blessing; and that it is better to keep distant with him for a time; and he bid Mary keep the black heifer for a keepsake from him. I put his own two cows out of the byre before I came in, not knowing what that crooked-

mindful Connor might do to them in his fancies, and I'll carry down his box, when I scrape all that belongs to him into it, as soon as the breakfast is over."

She then ran off to milk the cows, and would hardly give herself time to put a bit into her mouth, settling, and scouring, and driving here and there all the morning. When Richard's box was packed to her satisfaction, she went to the loft, and came down shortly, dressed in her best, with shoes and stockings on her feet, things she seldom troubled herself about only at odd times. She laid some yarn upon the table before me.

"Mistress," says she, "I owe you ninepence-halfpenny, and there's the value of it."

"I don't want it," says I; "I can stop what you owe me out of the next quarter."

"It's as well to take it now," says she, "while I have it to give. I'll earn no more in your service. My quarter was out last Friday, and I'm going to seek my fortune elsewhere."

"And are *you* going to leave me too, Darcy?" says I, mournfully enough, though I was tired out crying.

"Better to go of my own good-will, than wait to be turned out *again* it," says she. "You know your mind isn't in your own keeping, and I'm mistaken if the priest would let me stay long with you. If it came to the push, do you think you would be stout on my side, when you failed for him that had the same father and mother with yourself? Besides, I'd have a dread of living in the place now—I would, you may believe

it—for though I'm ignorant, I can give a guess there is neither luck nor grace over this house. You sent away from you one that had the blessing of God about him, and might have brought a share of it to you. I couldn't be easy in my mind after such doings, so it is better to go in peace, than stay with a heavy heart."

"All I can say is, that I'm obliged to you, Darky Elwood," says I, "for leaving me at this amplush, after eating my meat and taking my wages so long in friendliness and good-will."

"You'll get plenty more able to work nor myself," says she. "Age is coming on me, and I'll soon be little good for. Then, I leave you at no amplush. Paddy Donoghoe's daughter is ready to come this minute, a decent, willing girl, as you know. I spoke to her this morning about it, and she'll be with you, when she sees me cross the ford. You can try her, and if she don't please you, why, try another. And now, mistress, don't part me in anger, and ill blood, but just say, 'Darky, I wish you well'—and whether you say it or no, you'll have my prayers and good wishes to my dying hour, and so will you too—(looking over at Mary,)—early and late, may His blessing be on you."

I had no anger in my heart; it was all sorrow. "I never thought it would come to this," says I, "but I must bear it with the rest—You have my good word and wish, too, Darky; you deserve nothing worse from me. Keep your yarn, girl—I'll never use it. And Darky,"

says I, taking two shillings from my pocket, "don't be proud, but take this from me as a token of friendship—it's only all as one as from one sister to another—and, Darcy, you may be in sickness or want, and if you are, you know where to come to."

I never saw the tear in her eye before. She took the yarn and the money, and said with a low voice, "It's to Sandy Gordon's I'm going—he's used to me, and old Mabel don't know his ways—he'll fret less, when there is one from this house near him—I'll hear, too, more of what I heard last night among them—I've a surmise they're right, no matter who's wrong. Pah! I may as well be going, as I am to go; so the blessing of the desolate be with you."

I needn't tire you by going over and over the same thing, and telling you how I took on under my losses—I had a good right to feel them. Julia Donoghoe was not to be compared to Darcy, and, as for Farghy Conlan—Oh! he was the scourge.—I'll not talk of him as long as I can help it, for fear I might put more upon him than his due.

I could hear betimes of Richard, and the persecution he had got from all sides, though he kept greatly in doors, and was civil to all that came in his way. They houghed his two fine cows, and never left offending the old couple that gave him shelter. I could hear, too, that Darcy kept up her courage, though she came in for her share of ill usage. She left off the chapel entirely; but, whether she turned to be a Protestant out and out,

I couldn't learn. I might have known more, if I'd asked Mary, as I guessed she passed many an hour with them. But I did not, I dreaded hearing what would make me forbid her going, which would have grieved her, and brought sorrow to another too; so I trusted her to the Virgin, who she belonged to, hoping she would keep her in the right way.

I was going on this way for near a year and a quarter, when one day, Julia, who was the first to have news, told me Richard was failing for a long time, and that he was then very bad. I hadn't time to answer, when Mary came running in, "Mother," says she, "my uncle Richard is I believe for death; he's longing to see you; and, mother dear, won't you come?"

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" says I, "when I'm sure you knew he was growing bad."

"He wouldn't let me," says she, "he was fearful of bringing trouble on you."

"He was ever considerate," says I, putting my cloak about me, "but trouble and myself is hand and glove this many a long day; and now I'm so used to it, that a little one way or other makes no differ."

It was the dusk of the evening when I got to the house; and there was my poor Richard, pale and death-like in the bed, Darcy sitting behind him, holding him up in her arms.

"Norah," says he, the minute I went in, "I'm glad to see you once more."

"And it's I that am sorry to see you in this low, weak condition," says I.

"Don't grieve," says he. "It's all right. What use was I in this world? and I'm fast going to a better."

"Won't you make your peace with the priest before you die?" says I.

"I owe him no ill will," says he, "and I die at peace with him and all the world."

"But, oh!" says I, "won't you have his hand over you, to make all sure for you in the next world?"

"It's all made sure without him," says he. "My trust is in One that's stronger than he."

"Oh! what will I do?" says I, wringing my hands, "his soul will be lost, and I can't help it. But (turning to the old man,) it's you will have to answer for this. It's you ruined him, living, and you are keeping every Christian from him, when he's dying."

"No," says the old man mildly. "He is welcome to send for who he likes. If he wants the priest, I will carry the message myself?"

"I don't want him," says Richard. "He could do nothing for me. He that died on the cross, I look to, and he is able to save my soul."

"But the ointment, the ointment, Richard! How can you do without that?"

"Norah," says he, "my breath is fast going, and I have many things to say—things I ought to have said before, only my weak heart failed me. Oh! Norah, Norah—it is you that are in danger—it is you that are

in darkness; for, you have no dependance in the Saviour of sinners."

"Ah! what put that in your head?" says I, "to think so bad of me. Sure you know well that I honour Him, and the Blessed Mother, and the holy angels."

"What will I say to her?" says he, "my mind isn't clear, and I fear it is too late."

There was sorrow in his face when he said that; but all that was in my heart, was jealousy of Darky where she was, and I wanted to be in her place.

"If I was sitting where Darky is," I remarked to him, "you could say all you wanted easier to yourself—would you like it, dear?"

His face reddened up all with joy, and as for Darky, she laughed out, she was so glad; so in a minute, I took her place, and when I had his head leaning on my breast, I was happy, and I said, "Now, Richard, speak to me what is in your mind, and I'll never say one word to contradict you."

It was long before he could get utterance; and then he said many things that I disremember, not understanding the half, though Mary was quick, and helped him out in some things, when he wanted breath. I only remember he made me give him a promise, that I would listen to the Bible, if ever it came in my way, and then he was satisfied, and prayed for me, and my poor child.

I sat there holding him in my arms, till the turn of the night, when he died: and as I was weak and

no good, I took Darky's advice to go home quietly, and trust the poor body to them.

"Aye," says I, "I'll leave him with you. He chose to cast in his lot among you living, and I'll not go against his will now."

Not a Christian would go to the wake, nor could there be got a man to help to carry him to the grave, till they had to send across the Lough, to the English Settlement, for help; and they buried him in Drumarrane, in a corner, far away from his own people, not to give them offence. But that didn't soften their hearts, for the first thing old Sandy saw when he went out the next morning, was poor Richard's coffin lying before the door. It was useless to put him in the ground any place in the country; the same thing would only happen over again; so they took the coffin in a boat across the Lough, and as I heard, carried it as good as sixty miles, till they left him among Protestants—Darky going every foot of the way back and *forad*.

My mother died not long after. I believe she didn't curse me in her dying hour, but she wouldn't let me near her, for showing kindness at the last to poor Richard. She left all to my sister's family, and the world prospered with them. They are high up now. Oh! what would my mother say, if she was to look out of her grave, and see them ashamed of their name and their religion; for as soon as my sister's oldest son, the Attorney, drove his gig, he was awkward to be seen at

the chapel, among the mob, so he went off to the church, where there were other gigs to keep him company; and one by one, they all follow'd his pattern, for no reason in life, but pride. They didn't mind the priest; and they had no reason to dread the others, being rich and well united through other. They took the name of Downes too, and got great respect in the country to their faces—behind their backs people will be talking.

Darky walks in to me one fine morning, coming on harvest, the first time since she left me for good.

"You're welcome, Darky," say I, "where are you going this beautiful morning, with your handsome, new red cloak?"

"I wouldn't quit the country," says she, "without giving you a call. The old couple below there, gets such usage, they can stand in it no longer. They have good encouragement to go to the North, where they have friends, and they will fain have me go with them."

"I wonder how you will like being with strangers," says I, "when them that knows you would be glad to keep you."

"Ah!" says she, "where can I be, that I won't be a stranger? Have I one belonging to me, to bid me the time of the day? or is there one would thank me if I said I belonged to them?"

"You had your own troubles, sure enough," says I.

"Well!" says she, "what great matter about them? Doesn't He who is my dependance say, 'In the world

you will have trouble, but keep up a good heart, I have got the better of it?"

"You always had odd notions of your own, Darcy," says I, "and I see you got more of them lately."

"Odd or even," says she, "I wouldn't part them for more than you think. They have made my mind easy, and my heart light. Then, I have a wish to lay my bones beside them that feared God—it may be folly, but I can't help feeling a wish about it."

"What a heart you have, Darcy," says I, "to look upon us all as no better nor heathens?"

"Little matter what the like of me thinks," says she. "And, mistress dear, I'll not offend you now, when I can't be of use; but it will never leave my mind, that you'll be called yet. Night and day you had the prayers of him that is gone to his rest, and he had a good hope, that a blessing was in store for you. Ah! do you remember," says she, putting her hand upon my shoulder, "how he made you promise to give heed to the Bible, when it came in your way?"

"Bad as you judge me, Darcy," says I, "I'll keep that promise surely."

"That was what I wanted to say," says she, turning to go out, "they'll be gone a good piece of the road by this time, and I must walk fast to come up with them."

"Won't you stop to give a look at Mary," says I. "The poor thing will be sorry to miss you."

"I had her to myself just now," says she, "and I gave her an advice," when stopping a minute, she whis-

pered, "don't trust to Farghy Conlan. He's taking greatly on him, since his uncle's son is coming to be Curate to old Priest Staunton—all the Conlans have a bad drop in them, so have an eye to Farghy."

I never after could hear what became of Darky, though I inquired often and often.

You may remark, I don't say much of Mary. It is that I can't. I can talk of any thing else, be it ever so bad: but when I speak of her sore lot, it takes the little sense I have from me. I'll just hurry over it as shortly as I can—she was turned of seventeen, and having the name of a fortune, there was many looking after her. One boy in particular, that I couldn't fault, so he had my good wish, and might have had her's too when Farghy, one evening, opened the door, for as good as twenty men, crowding thick one after the other. "That girl belongs to me," says he, and in a minute they dragged her from my side—put her on horseback before one of them, and galloped away with my child. In the darkest night that ever came out of the sky, I run to Lismire, over hedge and ditch, like one that was mad. The family was in Dublin, but the Steward raised the country, and sent men out every side to search—it was useless—they were over the Lough, and up the mountains, where he had plenty of his own name to give him a hiding. I didn't see her face for three weeks, when she walked into the house to me early one morning—a woful creature, disgraced before the whole world. Mr. Dunworth wanted her to swear

again the villain, and promised to see justice done on him. But they put an oath upon her, before they let her away, that she would never injure him; besides, how could we stay in the place with all his factions; and how could she ever lift up her head among decent people, even if he was punished. The neighbours thought little of it, such things being common through the country; and his cousin the priest, made a joke of it to my face, and said she was lucky to come across a boy of sperrit. Well—they were married, but not before I had to give up all my little property to satisfy him; for when he found he was safe, he wouldn't right her, till I made him master of all. The priest made the bargain, and promised to see justice done to me.

If Farghy treated his wife well, I could have put up with his ill usage to myself, but he was one that had no feeling nor tenderness in him. Often we had to fly the house, when he was in liquor, and lie all night in an out-house, in fear and dread of our lives. While he would deny himself nothing, my poor child might go bare and naked; and he was so lavish and wasteful, that in three years all our substance was gone; and as to myself, I hadn't a decent pair of shoes to my feet. I had no one to complain to. The family never came back to Lismire after the old gentleman's death; and, supposing they were there, I would have been timorous to expose him, since he belonged to her after all. The only feeling of joy I had then, was when I got a letter from my Miss Clara, telling me under

her own hand, how she was going to be married to Lord Innisfallen; and how I was to go to her when she came to the Castle; and how she guessed I would be proud to hear her called my lady; and how she hoped Mary was happy, and sent her love to her. I was counting the hours till May, when she was to come; but May passed, and June passed, and no sign of them, so I said to myself, "There's no good before me; my bed is made for me, and hard as it is I must lie down in it, and say nothing."

There was one poor sickly child, and another was expected, without a rag to cover it when it came, and I was looking at her, thinking what I could do, when Julia Donoghoe, who was married to Andy Flannagan the year before, and lived close by, came running in, as if there was a mad dog at her heels.

"Oh, Mrs. Delany!" says she, "if you an't the proudest woman that ever was born. Oh! come to the door, and see what's before you."

I looked out; and, far off, coming over the brae, was as good as forty men, women and children, running and throwing down the stone walls by the perch, and flinging sods of turf to make stepping-stones over the bad bits of the bog.

"What is it, Julia?" says I: for the megrim was coming into my head, and the dimness was taking away my eye-sight.

"Oh, woman!" says she, "Isn't it the Lady—she you nursed from Lismire. Don't you see the feathers

blowing in the wind? and isn't the Earl himself with her, and two servants in gold lace, carrying a box? They left the coach at the broken pipe at Curnamuckilegh, and come all the rest of the way a-foot. But (looking at me) what a figure are you! Tighten yourself up, mistress dear. You'll have time enough, for they can't cross the ford till the stepping-stones is made. Och! haven't you a clean cap? Do you hear, Katty," says she, calling to her young sister. "Run to the chest under the bed, and bring me the white apron, and my high-cauled cap—never heed looking out the ribbon;—and pull the yellow silk handkerchief from my mother's head, she was putting it on now, going to confession; and be back in no time. Quick, you imp! or I'll be after you with a stick. Now mistress, on with my brogues. What luck I had to put them on my feet this day, of all the days in the year. Och! never mind the burn in your petticoat, the apron will hide it."


The shoes were on my feet in a minute, and Katty came in no time, with the other things; so before they crossed the ford, I was looking something like what I was before Farghy came across me.

On she came—my own Miss Clara!—dressed in silks and laces, and streamers, and feathers, and grandeur to no end. She took me about the neck, and kissed me before the whole set of them, that was flocking about them; and 'troduced me to the Earl, a fine-looking young man, that was breaking his heart,

laughing; and he shook me by the hand, and she did the same by Mary, and noticed the child she had in her arms. And all this in the open air. Then they walked into the house, follow'd by the throng, till there was no room to stir, when she talked all to me, and the Earl noticed the others, guessing they were his tenants. At last my Lady says, "Nurse, I want to speak to you alone," and she went before me into the little room. As soon as she had me to herself she said, "And now, Nurse, an't you obliged to me for coming to see you at your own house? and an't you proud of my finery, that was all put on for your credit? for don't suppose, Nurse, that I dress in this peacock fashion every day. But, my own nurse, you don't look as you used to do. I am afraid you are not happy, and Mary looks but poorly too."

Could any one blame me, if I opened my mind to her? I was forced to it, for she axed every thing. I had to confess Julia's shoes, and the mother's silk hankecher; but indeed I didn't tell *all* about Farghy, nor ever did to mortal, nor ever will. When I had done, she says, "Nurse, tell Lord Innisfallen I want to speak to him, and do you stay out till I call you."

They were alone for ever so long, and there was great whispering with the neighbours, and looking at Farghy, who kept behind backs. They came out of the room together; and then it was that I saw that the Earl had all the look of a Lord—my Lady too, had a proud way with her, that became her greatly.



"Is your son-in-law in the house?" says the Earl to me.

I pointed out Farghy to him, who looked bad enough.

Is your name Fergus Conlan?" says the Earl, looking over a paper he took out of his pocket.

"Yes; please your Lordship," says Farghy, "only they call me Farghy for shortness."

"The name is of little consequence," says the Earl; "but I am sorry to say, your character is very bad. With a cheap farm you are considerably in arrear; and it is only on account of your mother-in-law and your wife, that you have not been dispossessed long since. However, if you are ejected, they will not suffer, though you shall. I have information of another kind against you, Sir, and I advise you to take care of yourself. I shall have an eye upon you."

Outdacious as Farghy was, he hadn't a word to say. He shook under the Earl's eye, and he wasn't much better when my Lady herself took up the word.

"I expect, Sir," says she, "that *my nurse* will be treated with proper respect, such as I can see has not been shown to her; and that your wife, also, has no cause of complaint: your conduct cannot be concealed from me. From what my Lord has just told me, I understand he has the power of making an example of you. I therefore also advise you to take care of yourself."

There wasn't a man in the house didn't tremble in

his skin, when they heard them speak so sharp; for wicked work was hatching among them, and the quality was on their guard. My Lady then turned to Julia, and spoke freely to her, calling her Mrs. Flanagan, and thanking her for showing goodness to me, till poor Julia had to run out of the house for very shame.

They stayed full two hours, and didn't go till she slipped a ten-pound note into my hand, unknownst to anybody; and left a trunk full of clothes for me and Mary, making me promise to go for a time to the castle. But I wouldn't ever stop there for more nor an hour or two at a time. The maids wore veils on their faces, and my Lady's gentlewoman had a lap-dog of her own; and what would I do among them. Whether or no, Mary was to be looked after, and couldn't want me.

Things went on far better after that out. Though Farghy was dark, he was mannerly enough to me, and didn't misuse his wife. Even after the Earl and my Lady went to England, he could not give way to his evil tempers, for she left us under charge with Mr. Riversthorp, the agent, who was more dreaded by the people nor the Earl himself.

It was coming on the rebellion, and every man in the country was sworn—Farghy among the rest—for he couldn't have helped it, even if he didn't like it. All I know is, that he was very busy with them, and was to have a divide of the estate, when they had Ireland to themselves. As we lived in a lonely place, there were often guns and pikes left with Farghy, to

hide in the thatch, and other places about the house. I didn't venture to let on seeing or knowing anything that was done, for nobody's life was safe. They gave warning to us all to hold our tongues, when they burned the house in the mountains, and out of eleven poor souls, not one escaped the fire. As the time drew nigh they spoke more out. Farghy began to drop a hint that he would be kept under no longer, and he made no secret before us, that he was going with the rest to take the arms from Mr. Ryan, of Coolnabeg. When the whistle came to the windy at night, he took the gun from the hole behind the dresser, and called out, "Coming, boys, coming." Still he kept looking for something in the same place, while they whistled again louder, and I ventured to ax him what he was searching after.

"I've found it at last," says he, "it was only a handsome bullet of my own making. I was careful of it, for I laid it by long ago, to do the job of an informer. But it's a pity to waste good lead upon the like of them, when I want it for their betters—and a thrust of a pike will do their business well enough."

He didn't come back that night; and the news through the country in the morning was, that the Ryans had beat off the defenders, after killing five or six of them. My blood ran cold when I thought of Farghy; and, as for his wife, she never said one word, but only kept staring at me without any meaning in her eyes. In the course of the day, Julia heard that may be nobody

was killed, for nothing but blood was found, and the track of it soon lost. It couldn't be hid long from Mr. Riversthorp that Farghy was missing, and we were brought before the gentlemen to be examined. I was sworn on the book to tell all I knew, and that was little. There were others put on their oaths too, and they swore false—that was proved *again* them afterwards. Nothing would come out, though priest Conlan was there to help the gentlemen. He that knew all—and gave them their lesson beforehand! Two months after, the corpse was found in a bog-hole, with stones tied to the neck and feet to keep it down; and then the truth came to light. A beggar-woman, who confessed she went to steal turf in the bog, hid herself in the scraws when she saw them coming—and she heard the unfortunate man, who wasn't able to walk, begging of them, for God's sake, to carry him to his own place, and that he would die a thousand deaths, before he would betray one of them, or hurt a hair of their heads; and she swore home to the man (reared at the very door with him), that persuaded the others to show him no pity, saying he was cowardly, and would tell all the minute he was axed, and so hang them all; and it was he sat upon him, while they fastened the stones to him, he crying out all the time for mercy; and she saw them throw him alive into the bog-hole, and heard the long, long screech, till it was choked with the suffocation.

Oh! he was a heart-scald to me! and I won't deny, I often prayed to be delivered from him: for, besides

his treatment of my child, I was sure he plotted my death. But I couldn't be glad to have my prayers granted that way—to have him die with murder in his heart. I would have let him tear me to pieces, before I could wish that end to him, or the worst that walks the earth. If John Malone believes it of me, he may well lay anything else to my charge; but he only said it once, as I could hear, and I hoped he was ashamed of himself.

As for her that was born for sorrow, misfortune had done its worst—she couldn't feel it any more. In all the frights we got from the army, and the burning of Cahirscrough, and the gibbets that could be seen from the door, I never saw a change in her face, or a trembling in her hand. Her mind seemed all asleep, only when you roused her, and even then she was quiet, and would speak of anything unconcerned. Still it was a comfort to me to have her to look at, and I fondly thought she would come round again, and take care of me in my old age. I shut my eyes to the truth as long as I could, and it was only just at the last, I let myself have done with hoping. *Then*, there was another grief to weigh me down. The young priest had gone to join the rebels, where there was fighting, and Father Staunton was bed-ridden for a year, and there was no priest to be had for miles round. I mentioned my trouble to Julia, who would watch with me night after night, and helped me to keep up my spirits by giving in to all that I said.

"It's bad enough, Julia," says I, "to lose her in this world; but what would become of me, if I missed her in heaven?"

"Andy," says Julia, getting up, "shall run every foot of it this blessed minute to Aghavady. He lived with Priest Brereton till he married, and I often heard him say he would go forty mile, any day, to serve him."

He was off in a hurry; and she, that I didn't think took notice of a word we were saying, calls me to the bedside, and spoke freely from herself.

"Mother," says she, "don't be uneasy about me; nor don't give yourself any trouble about a priest. It's many a day since I lost my dependence on them—don't look so frightened, mother—there's nothing in them more than any other man. I die as my uncle Richard died, trusting to the Great Redeemer—the one that I left my soul with, since I was first told of what he had done for poor sinners."

"Oh, Mary dear!" says I, "what will become of me, if you are not right?"

"I have the Word of God for it," says she. "I often read it to my uncle; and it was that gave him the courage to stand out *again* all his friends. Don't be angry with me, mother, but as I said before, his look up, is my look up."

"Why would I be angry with you?" says I, "you that never offended me, from the hour you were born—no—I'm only bewildered with my grief. But oh!"

says I, falling on my knees, "all my prayer is, that whatever your portion and Richard's is in the next world, I may share it."

I lost her before Priest Brereton came, who was as good as his word to Andy. I believe Julia got him to say a mass; and she told me afterwards, that he said she was surely gone to heaven, by what he did for her: but I was in no way to notice any thing, if it wasn't my own desolation. I had gone through many a bitter passage in my day—I thought I was ground down to the earth, till I had neither sense nor feeling,—but when I closed *her* eyes, I felt that all was light before, and it was only then I knew what it was to be left alone in the world.

I threw up the house and land to Mr. Riversthorp—he advised me to it, and I was willing enough; for besides having no one to look after it, it would never leave my mind what Darky said, that neither luck nor grace was over the house from the night they put Richard out of it. My Lady settled twenty pounds a year on me, and made interest with Mr. Riversthorp for Julia's husband to get the place, which they were glad of, having to struggle with a small family. They got a house fitted up for me in Ballymaganlan, where I went with the two orphans that had nobody to look to but myself. The oldest, that was always sickly, died shortly, but the young one, called Luke, after Priest Conlan, did well, and is living. I gave him good schooling, and if he didn't larn, it was not my fault;

but boys will be wild, above all in a town, where they can flock together every minute in the day.

I got my health middling, considering. What should ail me? I had nothing to make me glad or sorry. One day was like another, and one year the very moral of the last. The Earl came to the castle once, and sent for me to tell me about my Lady, who though she never crossed the seas again, didn't forget me the longest day she lived. Oh what a world is it! Here am I left, and she has long been in her grave; taken away from her fine family when they wanted her most; and the Earl died before the fires that were lit for young Lord Ard-morn's coming of age, were hardly quenched. He is now called the Earl of Innisfallen, after his father, and they say has a great resemblance to his mother.

I might have been too tender to Luke. Some said I was; but it was not easy to be hard on a creature that had neither father nor mother. I had great pity for him, seeing him grow up without any way of living, but my little means that would die with me. He couldn't bear the confinement of shoemaking, when he tried it for a fortnight, the time my Lady paid the 'prentice fee with him to Jem Flaherty; and I dreaded he would go for a soldier; so I never stopped teasing the new Agent, and drawing up papers to the Earl, who was then alive, till I got him a bit of land, that they gave him on my account, and on *her* account that would do any thing for me.

Luke didn't make as much of it as others would, for

it was near that unlucky ball-alley; and then working all day wasn't what he was used to—it did not agree with him at all. He was never much inclined to taking an advice; so I thought it better to help him with the rent out of my pension, than to be always advising him. He took after my mother's family for being religious, and was of two or three orders that put a power of duty on him betimes.

About then I got acquainted with Miss Carpenter, the tutoress at Mr. Delmenhurst's—he that came in the place of old Parson Onswolf. The gentleman had a good name; and so had herself, only I used to wonder at hearing she was so unsatisfied with the place, and that she never stopped crying about the parlour, it was so little, till he built another. She was of a great family, and no doubt was reared in a big house, which made her timorous of living in a little one.

It was Mr. Knight, the new Agent, told Miss Carpenter how I nursed Lady Innisfallen, and how greatly I was thought of by them all. He said so much for me that she was curious to talk to me; and glad I was to be acquainted with her, when she told me she was at school with Lady Emily Bernscroft, my Lady's oldest daughter, and knew ever so much about the family that I was proud to hear.

Luke got a sore leg by a kick from a boy playing football, and he was advised to try the salt water for a cure. He was away passing ten days, when they brought me a message saying he was lying sick in the

town of Kiltaskeel, on his way home. It was thirty miles off; a long way for me at my time of life, that never was five miles from the house I was born; but I went, and found him low enough, though not very bad; for all he wanted was a little money to free him out of the town. The house he lodged in was throng with all sorts of people going to the sea and coming from it; some sick and some well. In the bed next to me was a woman bad with a decay; and there was such noise and confusion, and drinking and disputing, that I longed to get out of it, thinking it was a place where Luke would only larn bad parables, and get no good at all. Just before nightfall there came in a young man, that I guessed was above the common sort, though he wore a big frieze coat on him; but when he threw it off he had fine cloth under. He went at once over to the sick woman and spoke kindly to her; and after a while took out a little book, and read as good as half an hour, and then he knelt down by the bed-side and prayed. Few in the room went down upon their knees, though some did, while others of them made a noise. Luke, in particular, was so uneasy with his leg that he kept rocking the stool, so that I couldn't hear a word. When he went away, one man began to curse him and call him names, till a woman, who was sitting by the fire next me, told him to behave himself, or she would tell of him to them that would make him mend his manners, and the people of the house said he was a good friend to them, and did harm to nobody.

"Who is he?" says I, whispering to the woman that took his part.

"He follows the sea," says she, making answer, "and he goes by the name of Captain Summerfield."

"And what was he doing here?" says I, "talking and praying like a minister!"

"It's a way he has," says she. "He's ridiculed by the quality for it; but he's good to the poor, and goes to see the sick, and provides for them if they need it; and he reads the Bible to any that will listen to it."

"What's that you say?" says I.

"I say," says she, "that he reads the Word of God, to any one that will hear it."

"That wasn't what you said," says I, "you spoke something about the Bible."

"Well," says she, "sure I only meant he reads the Bible to the poor."

"And now," says I, "will you tell me, for I have a reason for axing, which was it the Bible or the Word of God he was reading now?"

"Well, you're the quarest woman I ever see," says she. "Ah! where did you live, dear, to this hour, not to know that the Bible and the Word of God is all the one and the same thing. Is there no priest or no school in your parts to bother you about them things?"

"No matter," says I. "There is a vow upon me to listen to the Bible when it came across me, and what will become of me now that didn't know it when it was in the house with me!"

"If that's all that troubles you," says she, "you may make your mind asy, for he reads it in the school-house every morning after six o'clock. I'm going myself to-morrow, and if you like I'll show you the way."

"If it was ten miles," says I, "I must go, and don't fail to call me in time. It's likely you have the same vow as myself upon you."

"Not a bit," says she, "I go because I found the benefit, and I will go, though the priest wouldn't hear my confession last Saturday, because I wouldn't give it up. The priests hate it as they hate poison."

"I'd be sorry to come across the priest in his anger," says I, "but do what he will I must go through with it. The promise to the dying can't be broken."

We were the first in the school the next morning, and I listened to every word that he said and read. "You're a fine man, thinks I to myself, and the Bible is a fine book, when it can tell you so plainly all that is in my heart."

When it was over he noticed me being a stranger, and spoke so feeling to me, that I was forced to tell him my vow, and how pleased I was that I kept my word before I died.

"Would you like to have a Bible of your own?" says he.

"Ah! Sir," says I, "where would the like of me get it?"

"Suppose I gave you this?" says he, taking one down from the shelf.

"And what would I do with it, Sir," says I.

"You tell me you can read," says he, "therefore read this. Your promise, as you tell me, was to give heed to the Bible whenever it came in your way. There it is for you, and what can you say now?" I was taken by surprise, for I thought my vow was over, and I was sorry to have so much put on me.

"It's hard," says I, "to begin reading again at my years, like a child going to school, but I see I can't help it; so, Sir, I thank you, and till my eyes fail entirely, I'll try and spell over a little every day. I suppose, Sir, a little may do at a time."

"Certainly," says he, smiling at me, "a little will do, and I'll mark where you may begin;" and so he turned down two or three leaves, and scratched a pen across bits which he desired me to go over and over till I had them by heart.

"Now put it up," says he, "and God prosper it with you! I may never see you again, but I will remember you in my prayers."

I didn't show the book to Luke. He might have thought it troublesome, so I hid it in my bundle, and when I got home I put it in the bottom of my box.

I soon found what a wearisome thing it was to have to read ever so little. I would willingly have taken any other labour on me, and little good it would ever have done me, if I hadn't opened my mind to Miss Carpenter about my vow, and how sharp Mr. Summerfield took me up; and how the megrim came on the

moment I opened the book; how strange the words were to me, and how I could get no meaning out of it by no means.

"We must try," says she, "and see what can be done to relieve you. Suppose I read while you listen; will not that do?"

I was right glad of the offer, and she being as willing as myself, would read every time she came to me, and make me look over the book with her, so that I could go over the same place easily when she was not with me. After all, it was long, long before I had any liking for it, though in the course of time my mind grew unsettled, and thoughts wouldn't leave my head, do what I would. Miss Carpenter could read beautifully, and so she ought, being at a school where Earls' daughters got their breeding; but she couldn't tell me what was making me uneasy. All she said made it darker and darker to me, till I grew cross with myself and (more shame for me) with her too. She saw she couldn't satisfy me, and what did she do, but without saying one word she brings in Mr. Delmenhurst himself upon me to try what he could do. The gentleman was so mild that I lost my dread of him in no time, and my heart went with every word he said. From that out I got a glimmer of what was in the Bible, and Miss Carpenter herself came on wonderfully in the way of telling the meaning.

It would tire you out, if I was to tell you what passed in my mind for two years, for it was all between

my mind and myself. I would sometimes be so cast down, that I could wish I had never seen Mr. Summerfield, or laid my eyes on the Bible, and still I never was easy only when I was blinding my eyes over it, or talking about it to Miss Carpenter. At last, *again* my wish, I ended in seeing that Richard had the truth on his side, and that Mary chose the right way when she went after him, and I was resolved to follow them two, let what would happen, still with a hope that I wouldn't have anything to bear, and that I might slip away unknownst to them all. There was no use in telling what I thought to any one in the house, for who would listen to me? Luke was married to a girl he fancied for himself. He didn't ax me about it; for if he had, it wasn't Sibby M'Mahon would have my good will. I wanted to leave him when he got a housekeeper, but he swore he would not part me till he put me in the ground, which I thought showed goodness in his nature, seeing he often seemed to think little about me.

Things went on quiet and asy then. The priest let me alone, and never once axed why I didn't go to the chapel as usual. He wasn't particular with any of his flock for that; it was only when they stayed long from confession, that he was angry about his dues. I won't deny it, I often made excuses in the beginning; and once, when he had a station the next door and sent for me, I was taken so by surprise that I did go, when my heart told me I was doing wrong. The truth was, I dreaded facing the world with every body's tongue

upon me, but the time came when my mind came out without my knowing it.

Mr. Delmenhurst's school was the first thing that gave offence to the priest. He ordered the people to take the children away, and when some would send them in spite of him, he went to the school and beat the poor children right and left, till they ran away crying for their lives. The parson was very quiet at first, and reasoned cases with the priest, who would give in to nothing, so he told him he wouldn't try any more to please him, but would take his own way. Then he wrote a proclamation, telling the people how the priest was deceiving them, and keeping them in ignorance; and invited them to come and hear him preach on a Wednesday evening, and that he would send men to read their own Testament in English and Irish, and that the school was always there for the children, and a hearty welcome for them besides.

Everybody flocked to the church the first two or three nights, myself with the rest of them: and such a talk as there was through all the place, some praising and some finding fault, but all willing to hear. The priest soon stopped them going there too, only the few that never heeded him. Dennis Brady was the man that took the lead from the first to fight the priest, and was always putting up others to do the same. He got the Readers into many a house, and often hindered them getting ill usage from the people; for he was the dread of the whole country, being so wicked when he was

vexed; and withal able to beat any six. Them that joined with Dennis were marked men. The priests was ever abusing them from the altar, and they went in and out in fear of their lives. I would talk when others would talk, so I got a bad name like the rest that would listen to the Readers; and Sibby, when she begun to suspect my mind, had a station in the house, and axed money from me to pay for the meat and whiskey, that she wanted to entertain the two priests. I spoke out then, and bore up surprisingly again all she and Luke could say; and what was more, I could answer Father M'Dowl the next day without much fright; taking care to tell him that I didn't fear a charm again, such as old priest Staunton frightened me with long ago; and that it was no strange thing in my family, seeing that my brother and my child went before me, trusting and believing what I did then.

I won't say the house was agreeable to me after that; but what use is there in telling things. I might have been discontented with Richard if they had let him live with me, when I knew his change; and I might have been a torment to *her* if she had explained herself any time, but in her last hour.

Dennis Brady's set, as they called them, could stand it no longer. The Romans persecuted them, while the Protestants was shy of their company; so they fixed it among themselves,—nine men and five women,—to go in a body next Sunday to church and read their recantation. They well knew who was on their side, and

Dennis opened it at once to me that I must join them. I didn't like it, and I said so—"What use," says I, "in making a public show of myself? I'll go to the church every Sunday if that pleases you, but I'm too old to bring the eyes of all the world on me;—their tongues are heavy enough without that."

Oh! Dennis could talk enough for any ten, and he left me till I hadn't a word to say. He said I was denying *Him* before men—that I was ashamed of *Him*: and not Dennis only, but Miss Carpenter herself advised me to it, so I consented to make the fifteenth the next Sunday.

When the day came, I went with a deal of courage, for I was satisfied it was a right thing. I don't know how it was, but from the time I begun to understand the Bible, I was losing the fear of man, that was always giving me a failing heart, above all, when taken in a hurry. John Malone says, I confessed that I was ashamed of myself when I was going down street to the church—well I was—but it was ashamed of the bonnet—the first I ever had on my head,—and I thought all the people would make game of me for it. The only reason I had in life for putting it on was, that I thought it would make me look more like a Protestant, and I was resolved to be one all out. Miss Carpenter made it for me out of an old black silk handkercher I had time out of mind, for I wouldn't take the handsome one she offered me, afraid they might say I turned for gain. As

for the shawl that was in the newspaper, and was spoken of at a great meeting in Dublin, Sibby herself knows she measured it twice out of the pedlar's hand before I paid my own money for it, a month before that day.

Barring the pelting of dirt we got from a parcel of idle boys as we were leaving the church, there was nothing out-of-the-way to offend us. I was thankful Luke never said one word to me after it was over, though he couldn't look me in the face ; and I wouldn't notice Sibby's being unmannerly, and beating the cat that was fond of me, for she got no rearing, and had loud ways with her at the best of times. It was a comfort too, to think how easy I was quit of the priest, for he didn't come near me, and spoke of me in the chapel as a poor doting body that had neither sense nor reason. But it wasn't all out a fortnight when a storm came from a quarter I little looked for it. My pension was stopped by the Earl of Innisfallen ! Mr. Knight brought me the news himself, and came kindly into the house to advise me.

"I am sorry for you, Mrs. Delany," says he, "but Lord Innisfallen is determined not to encourage such folly in his tenants. I cannot tell who informed him of your recantation. I can only declare to you his intention to withhold your annuity till you recant again. It was a silly thing for you to do at your years. What can you know of the difference between one religion and another ! The old one might have

answered you well enough. It's much the easiest way of getting to heaven, as they tell me—so be advised—make your peace with Mr. M'Dowl, and I will venture to pay your next half-year, which will be due in a few days."

"His father would never have done this," says I.

"It's of more consequence to you," says he, "what the son does; and I assure you he is determined to make an example of you, to show the world how much he disapproves of the disturbance you and others are making in the country."

"If my Lady was living," says I.....

"Nonsense, woman," says he, "she's dead, and you'll soon be dead yourself, so make the best of the world while you are in it."

"And what am I to do for the next, Sir?" says I.

"Oh! let it take care of itself," says he, laughing. "I'm not come to preach to you, only to advise you for your good, and if you won't take my advice, why I can't help it. Bring me a line from M'Dowl, to say he is satisfied, and all will be well yet. Try your hand with her," says he, turning to Luke, as he was getting on horseback. "I wouldn't give a pin for a Carmelite that couldn't convert his old heretic grandmother."

"I knew what you'd bring upon us all," says Luke. "I knew the priest would find a way to punish you—he that writes every week to the Earl, and tells him what to say in parliament."

"His father wouldn't do so by me," says I, "for all the priests that ever trod in shoe-leather."

"I'm only fearful," says Sibby, "that the priest will never be brought round, after all the impudence she gave him."

"He'll not be after hurting me," says he, "if he can help it; and what can he say again it, when she makes her apology in the chapel, and humbles herself under him again."

"I'll never do that, Luke," says I. "You may put that out of your head entirely—I thought well of what I was doing before I went through with it, and I'm not one to be changing back and forad for nothing."

"You'll have to do it," says he, looking horrid at me. "I won't be the may-game of the world. I won't give favour or encouragement to them that says one word again our holy religion. I wink'd at it long enough, till I see what I lost by it. Fling back the heretic bonnet to them that would buy your soul for hell, and go like a dacent Christian woman to your duty next Sunday, and confess it was for gain you done it."

"What a work you make about that bonnet!" says I. "It wouldn't trouble me if I never put it on my head again, for it only makes a noise in my ears, and hinders me from hearing rightly. But I won't undo what is done, for you or any man—I couldn't—it would be denying my blessed Saviour; and what use would all the world be to me if my soul was lost."

"Oh!" says Sibby, snatching the child out of the cra-

dle, and trying to cry over it. "Oh! what will become of me and my poor child! What a woe woman I was ever to join myself to such a cursed crew. We'll lose our little land, and what will we turn to then?"

"It was your own free will, Sibby," says I, "to come into this house. It wasn't my axing made you do it, and there is no fear of your losing any thing—the loss is all my own."

"It was the unlucky day," says she, going on, "that I was flattered to make one of yes—and you," turning to Luke, "you'll never take a thought till they lay a trap for your life, as they did for your father. It was she and her turncoat brother's faction did that for him, and after, swore away the lives of the innocent to screen themselves. But I'll take care of myself and this unfortunate child, I won't sit down quietly and let myself be poisoned. So I give you fair notice, Luke Conlan, that I'll never stretch myself in the same bed beside you while you keep that cursed old woman in this house."

"Who cares what you'll do," says he, "it would be a lucky riddance to be quit of you all any hour." Then, turning to me, "I'm going to the priest this very minute, and what will I say to him about you?"

"You may say, if you please," says I, "that he has no call to me, nor I to him; and that I would beg my bread from door to door, sooner than go back again to the Romans."

"No," says he, "but I'll tell him you are begging; and much good may do you with your trade. Bundle

up what belongs to you and be off to your comrades; for, under this blessed roof you'll not stop one hour. What are you standing there for?—Didn't you hear me, and didn't I desire you to follow your comrades?"

"Luke," says I, "think a bit. It's for your sake I would stay here a little—I know I will be taken care of—I have the promise of Him that feeds the birds of the air for that. And I won't stop long with you: only let me go as if it was my own notion; for what will the people say of you, if you turn your old grandmother out to beg, that divided with you while she had a penny in her pocket."

"Who thanks you for it?" says he. "Didn't my father leave a good property after him, if you had taken care of it for me? It was my substance you had the spending of, and you'll put no more out of my way; so (swearing a great curse) flit this minute, or I'll tear every rag belonging to you in pieces, and put you out as naked as you were born."

"You may leave that shawl behind you," says Sibby, while I was hurrying my little things into a bundle; "you owe me fourpence of the price, and I'll be at no loss by you."

I left it down without saying one word, and was delaying a little, thinking Luke's heart might soften, when he said, "You're over long dressing; one would think you were going to church, you're taking such pains with your old carcase."

"I'm ready now," says I, "and Luke dear"

"None of your bother," says he, "I'm sick of the sight of you. You needn't be gabbling a blessing or a curse, for one out of your mouth is as welcome as the other. Be off, I say, and don't keep the light of the door from us."

"And don't forget your bonnet," says Sibby, taking it from the cradle where she had it wisped up, and throwing it after me out of the door. "You can settle yourself by the glass in Joe Adam's windy," and then she began to sing as merry as a lark while I was within hearing.

"It's all right and just," I repeated to myself as I walked towards Ballymaganlan. "The time was long, but my sin found me out at last. Thirty-one years ago, Richard was put out of my house, and though I didn't do it with my own hands, I consented to others doing it, and I let him live with strangers and die with them. The same has now come to my turn, only I must look for charity from any one who will give it, and he was not beholden while he lived. It is all right and just, I know it is; and my prayer will ever be, that He who has put it on me will give me strength to bear it."

I was ashamed of telling Mr. Delmenhurst of Luke, or even of Sibby; but I ever had a fashion, when my heart was full, of letting all out if I once begun at all; so he soon knew every thing, and he didn't abuse him, he only said we ought to be thankful if the evil of our hearts was not allowed to break out, for that we all had the same nature, and a bad nature it is. He lodged me

with a decent Protestant family, and I hadn't to go out to look for charity, which, I won't deny, I dreaded still, even when I thought it might come to it; for money came in on all sides, and Miss Carpenter and the Parson let me want for nothing.

Poor Luke was sorry enough, I'm sure, for what happened in his haste. Every mouth was open at him. Even some of the Carmelites checked him about it; and priest M'Dowl said, he ought to have waited a little, though it was himself put him up to it. After all, what could he do when the Earl was so mad about his people turning to church, that he harished them to no end. The poor weaver was banished, and Pat Coyne had to carry his little turf three miles, as Mr. Knight was ordered to take his bit of bank from him, and none of the neighbours dare let him cut a sod of theirs. When Dennis found things going so contrary, and that the orangemen wouldn't let him in among them, he thought it best to make a friend of my Lord and the Agent, and then he was as busy persuading them to go back again, as he was before to bring them to the church. He could only flatter two after him, Kit Sullivan and Molly Moran. They three axed pardon in the chapel, and said it was for the lucre of gain they left their religion, and that they never had an asy moment till they came back to it again. The rest stood stedfast, and are likely to remain so, with all the persecution they get.

I haven't much more to say, only how Miss Carpen-

ter never was at rest till she made known my case to Lady Emily, and Lady Clare, my Lady's two oldest daughters; and they at once agreed to give me the same pension out of their own pockets. It was a beautiful and feeling letter Lady Emily wrote, saying, she minded well that her mother had a wish for me (and so she had), and that her brother had a good heart, and did all for the best; and that nobody could be more generous, but that he didn't like to make hypocrites. No doubt, it was all true. He was deceived, I'm sure; for it wasn't in the nature of a child of his father and mother, to be cruel or ill minded. It was well known the priests threatened him, if he didn't do as they pleased, to turn the election again his cousin Captain Berncroft, and to bring in, spite of him, the Donnellys-people that the family couldn't bear.

Luke thought of me after a time, and wanted me to go to live with them again; and Sibby sent back the shawl, and offered to put up a peg to hang my bonnet on; but I judged it better to leave them the place to themselves. I give them help by times, for what would I do with all the money I have; but I was ever fond of quietness, and the older I grow the more I like it.

